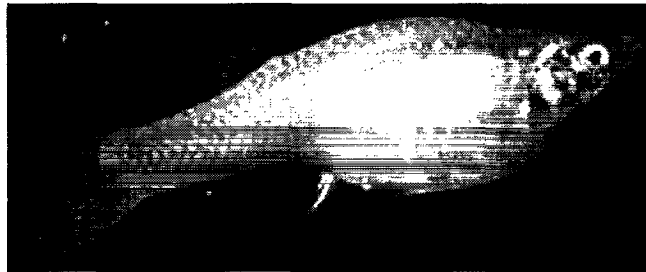


# Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District

155 Mason Circle, Concord, CA 94520

## Mosquitofish



Mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*) are live bearing freshwater minnows. These small fish (1-2 inches in length) are top swimmers that feed on insects and wind-blown organic debris at the surface of the water. They have a voracious appetite. An adult can eat up to 500 mosquito larvae a day! This makes them an excellent biological tool for mosquito control, as the fish gobble up the mosquito larvae before they have a chance to develop into the adult stage.

### BIOLOGICAL CONTROL

As a natural predator of mosquito larvae, mosquitofish have been used for mosquito control purposes for several decades in California. More than 100,000 of these fish are produced each year at the Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District's mosquitofish production facility in Concord. These fish are routinely stocked by technicians to control mosquito populations throughout the County. Some common 'sources' or sites where these fish are stocked include; artificial lakes, irrigation ditches, storm channels, and natural & industrial ponds.

### ARE YOU RAISING MOSQUITOES?

During warm summer months mosquitoes can complete their life cycle from egg to adult in just five days! There are many places where mosquitoes could be developing in your own back yard! Spend a few minutes doing a mosquito check around your yard. Some common sites where you might find larvae include:

- Ornamental ponds
- Animal water troughs
- Swimming pools and water features not maintained

You should not find larvae in pools that are regularly filtered and chlorinated. If you see tiny worm-like creatures wiggling at the surface of the water, take a closer look to see if they are mosquito larvae. You may need to enlist the support of biological control and obtain some mosquitofish.

### WHERE TO GET MOSQUITOFISH!

Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District furnishes mosquitofish to Contra Costa County residents free of charge. Fish can be picked up at the District's office at 155 Mason Circle in Concord (off of Bates Avenue) Monday through Friday (except holidays) from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Containers are provided.

## **MOSQUITOFISH CARE**

When you get your fish home, you will need to acclimate the fish to their new pond (or other site) by placing the container with fish directly into the water for 10-15 minutes or until the pond water and the container's water are near the same temperature. Then release the fish.

These fish are opportunistic feeders in that they eat just about anything. During the warmer months they usually do not need supplemental feeding. However, if there is no natural food present (i.e. new pond), some artificial food, such as crushed dry dog food will be necessary for fish survival.

Mosquitofish can tolerate water temperatures between 33 and 104 F, but prefer temperatures between 77 and 86 F, and are often found in the shallow unshaded region of a pond. algae in limited amounts will not harm fish but may become unsightly. Most pet stores have or can secure for you a preparation with directions for use in fish pools to control algae.

*These hardy fish should survive through several seasons and reproduce to provide continuous biological control of mosquitoes near your home. Your family and neighbors will thank you for your help in mosquito control.*

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